Iowa Department of Human Services
CHILD CARE CENTER EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE

Name of Center: Spring Ahead Learning Center **Enrollment:** 32 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 18223

Street: 215 Clark ST **City:** Lime Springs Iowa **Zip** 52155 **County:** Howard

Mailing Address: PO Box 72, Lime Springs, IA, 52155

Director's Name: vacant **Phone Number:** 563-566-8058

On-Site Supervisor(s): Courtney Reicks **E-Mail:** springaheadlc@hotmail.com

Date(s) of Visit:

Licensing Visit **Unannounced Visit** **Off Year Visit** X **Administrative Change**

LICENSING VISITS

New Application **Re-Application** X **NA**

Signed Application (470-0722) Received **Yes** **No** X **NA** **Date Signed:**

FIRE INSPECTION X **State** **Local** **NA** **Is Fire Inspection Approved?** X **Yes** **No** **NA**

Date Inspected: 10-20-2021

Comments : Compliance on 11/17/21

LICENSE TYPE: X **Child Care** **Preschool (ages 3-5 meets three hours or less per day)**

Financial Type: Profit X Non-Profit NA

Accredition: Accredited NAEYC NSACA Other X NA

Program Serves: X Infants (0-23 mo.) X 2 Years X Preschool-Age X School-Age

Get-Well Evening Care Special Needs

SCHEDULE: X Year-round School-Year Summer Only

HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General	12	12	16	20	60
Summer					0

QRS Rating: 4

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 04-01-2023 to 04-01-2025
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Becky Frost **Date:** 05-01-2023

I. IF CURRENT LICENSE IS PROVISIONAL, IDENTIFY THE CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

N/A

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

On 03/07/23 I made an unannounced licensing visit to Spring Ahead Learning Center in Lime Springs. I met with Jodie Hubka, the director of the program. Ms. Hubka became the director in May 2017. Ms. Hubka has an early childhood diploma, an AA in liberal arts and two years of business administration. She is a NAEYC member. Courtney Reicks is the on-site supervisor. She started with the program in June 2017 and is the staff member in the infant room. She became the on-site supervisor in November 2022. She has an early childhood diploma. The center employs five staff members.

The program is in a free-standing building. The program opened on 02/04/13. The center serves infants through school-aged children and operates Monday through Friday from 5:00 am until 6:00 pm. They offer a three-year-old preschool program that operates Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 8:00 am until 3:00 pm. Ms. Hubka is the preschool teacher. There are currently 32 children enrolled in the center. The center has a Quality Rating System (QRS) level of 4 which expires on 11/30/23.

The center operates out of the following classrooms, Cuddles (infants, birth until 18 months), Tumblers (18 months-two-year-olds), Explorers (two and three-year-olds) Caterpillars/Butterflies/Spring Ahead (preschool and school-aged children). An inspection of each room was completed.

Windows provide natural lighting. The rooms in use are decorated with the children's art projects, and posters to assist the children with the learning process, such as the alphabet, shapes, colors and numbers. The children's birthdays were posted. There is an area for circle time.

The centers observed on the day of the licensing visit include library, Lego/blocks, table toys, games, puzzles, transportation, play dough, art, dramatic play, writing, math, science/discovery, woodworking, sensory table and music. Centers were arranged in a manner that allowed easy movement between activities, but it also allowed for clear supervision by staff members. Materials were in good condition. The materials are located at child level, so they were easily accessible to the children.

The program uses a variety of resources to create lesson plans. Activities are developed around weekly themes. A lesson plan was available for review in every room. There is an Epson projection board in the preschool room.

There was a phone with emergency numbers in the classrooms. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and evacuation diagrams were posted by the main program doors and outdoor exits. A daily schedule was posted in each room.

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. I reviewed documentation of monthly playground inspections. A radon test was completed in March 2021 and is good for two years. Results were within EPA guidelines. Ms. Hubka is aware she is due to complete another radon test. All program rooms should be tested. The fuel burning inspection was completed and no concerns were noted. A carbon monoxide detector was on site in the Explorers room. Outlets were protected. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 10/20/21, with compliance on 11/17/21.

The program is using the Brightwheel App to complete daily sheets and to keep parents informed of all the children's activities.

Cribs are used to nap for the infants and then children transition to mats or cots. Mats are used in the preschool room and cots are used in the one-year-old room and two-year-old room. Mats and cots were stored correctly.

The program does participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The program provides breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. Robert "Bobby" Ostrom is the cook. A new menu is made each month. Menus and allergies were posted. The program uses a combination of pre-dished and family style to serve the children.

I observed the kitchen to be clean and organized. There is a dishwasher and two small sinks available in the kitchen to wash dishes. There is an industrial refrigerator and an upright freezer and thermometers were present. Food items were stored according to NHSPS guidelines.

In the infant room the center provides one type of formula, baby food and cereal. Parents can bring their own if they prefer a different brand. Bottles are washed in the room using the three-step method. There is a refrigerator in the infant room and a thermometer was present.

The center uses bleach and water to sanitize the food tables and disinfect the changing tables. Bleach bottles are clearly labeled. I observed a diaper change in the infant room. The staff member held the child while cleaning and disinfecting the table. This cannot occur. Wash the child's hands and then place them down and clean and disinfect the changing table.

While I was in the infant room there were a couple two-year-old children present. This cannot occur. Children under the age of eighteen months cannot be cared for in the same room as children two-years-old and older.

The parent information is located on a bulletin board inside the entrance. The mandatory reporter, childcare consultant and the handbook availability were posted. The license was conspicuously hung. A no-smoking sign was posted at the entrance.

The center has three playground areas. The school-age children have a large space behind the center. Rubber tiles are used for surface cushioning. There is also a concrete able with basketball hoops and a grassy area. There is climbing equipment with slides and other activities. There are swings and a balance beam. There is a rope climbing piece of equipment. Trees are available for shade.

To the side of the playground there are two areas. One is used for children two and older and one is for infants/toddlers. Rubber tiles are used for surface cushioning. Slides and playhouses are in both areas. There are small riding toys in the infant/toddler area. In the other area there is a small climbing wall, sensory table, music center, teeter totter and basketball hoop. There is bench for children to rest and trees are available in both areas for shade.

Staff and children files were reviewed at the time of the licensing visit. I reviewed eight children files. There were two outdated physicals and one invalid immunization certificate because it was not on the mandated Department of Health and Human Services certificate. Ms. Hubka has contacted the families to update the physicals.

I reviewed two staff files. There was one invalid physical because it was not on the mandated Department of Health and Human Services employee physical form. Staff members must always use the DHH form.

I reviewed policy and procedures, staff and parent handbooks. The necessary written emergency procedures and policies were present. Emergency Preparedness Plans have been completed.

I observed staff members to have great interaction with the children. There are currently only five staff members covering all the hours at the center. They are dedicated and put in long hours to make sure the children are cared for. I observed staff members actively dancing and singing with the children. They were enthusiastic and animated and made the classroom fun for the children. Staff members offered the children choices and were flexible with their schedules to meet the needs of the children. They interacted with the children at their level. Staff members encouraged the children to use their imaginations. The children seemed to enjoy and feel comfortable in the program.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The program has a Quality Rating System (QRS) level of 4 that expires on 11/30/23.

The center hallway is decorated with the children's art and pictures of the children which makes it an inviting environment.

There are pictures of the staff members in the entrance.

The center took families and children on a field trip to the science museum.

Ms. Hubka states they have increased the wages for the staff members.

Ms. Hubka states she has a good core group of staff members that work well together and have good knowledge of the licensing standards and rules of the center. They bounce ideas off one another. They have longevity and this allows parents to feel comfortable and it provides stability. They have hired quality staff members to help during the summer months. Unfortunately, Ms. Hubka and Sonda Stephens are leaving the program in the near future.

Ms. Hubka states they offer a full day three-year-old preschool program. She states the preschool program brings in children who would not normally come to the center.

Ms. Hubka states the program is flexible and parents enjoy that. She states they try to accommodate parents as much as they can.

The center is a bus stop for the school-aged children.

The center goals include making a plan to sustain higher wages for staff members long-term; hire additional quality staff members; plan for more fundraisers; and increase enrollment.

IV. IDENTIFY THE ASPECTS OF OPERATION THAT FALL BELOW THE STANDARDS REVIEWED:

109.11(2): A safe and properly equipped area is provided for infants that does not allow for intrusion by children over two years of age.
Children over age two who remain in the infant area are placed at the recommendation of a physician or AEA due to a significant developmental delay. Children are placed for a limited time with DHS approval if doing so does not pose a threat to the infants.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

A full license is issued. All DHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

On 05/01/23 an administrative change is being made to remove Jodie Hubka as the director of the program. She has left the program and the position is currently vacant. Melissa Vobr, the director of Kessel Kids in Cresco, IA, is assisting the program with director needs until a new director is hired.

*Note: If you are the Child Care Center Director and you feel something is unclear or unjustly cited, please contact your DHS Licensing Consultant to discuss the issue. The child care director may also send a response which will be placed in the licensing file.

*Note: If you are a member of the general public, there may be additional information contained in the public file. You may contact the DHS Licensing Consultant to inquire.